

Assessing for Environmental Accessibility Adaptations (EAA)

Office of Aging and Adult Services



What is an Environmental Accessibility Adaptation?

- ▶ An Environmental Accessibility Adaptation (EAA) are physical adaptations to the home environment to:
 - Reasonably assure the health and welfare of the participant, or
 - Enable the participant to function with greater independence in the home.
- ▶ EAA examples can include:
 - Ramps;
 - Lifts, i.e., Porch Lifts, Stair Lifts;
 - Modifications to bathrooms, i.e., Roll in Showers, Wheelchair Turnaround Space;
 - Door Widening; and/or
 - Installation of Grab Bars and/or Handrails.

Who Can Receive Environmental Accessibility Adaptations (EAA)?

- ▶ Those enrolled in the Community Choices Waiver (CCW) are eligible to receive EAA.
 - EAA is not a covered service under the Adult Day Health Care Waiver (ADHC Waiver) or State Plan Long-Term Personal Care Services (LT-PCS); therefore, participants enrolled in those programs are not eligible to receive EAA.
- ▶ There must be an identified need for the EAA .
 - The adaptation is considered necessary and without the modification, the participant would require institutionalization.

Why Assess for EAA?

- ▶ Appropriate home modifications can **improve** a participant's **health** and **safety**.
 - Helps to prevent home accidents that could cause injury to a participant and/or possible death.
 - Helps to prevent falls that could cause physical consequences, i.e., fractures, bruises, physiological effects, loss of autonomy, and other consequences.
 - A significant number of falls are due to environmental hazards.
- ▶ Home modifications can improve a participant's independence; thus, **improving quality of life**.

When to Assess the Need for EAA?

- ▶ Support Coordinators (SCs) will assess the need for EAA:
 - During the MDS-HC assessment process (i.e., Initial, Annual or Status Change),
 - During quarterly face-to-face visits, and
 - As the need for EAA is identified or requested by the participant.
- ▶ Direct Service Providers (DSPs) can assess the need for EAA when making home visits and, at any time, can provide SCs with input from in-home direct service workers (DSWs).

Where to Assess the Need for EAA?

- ▶ The need for EAA will be assessed in the participant's home. Complete a walk through, evaluating the areas of the home that the participant uses.
- ▶ Findings and areas of concern will be documented:
 - On the MDS-HC Section O. Environmental Assessment, and
 - In the Care Plan, when the need is present, or
 - In the Support Coordination documentation when a need for EAA is discovered during the plan of care year, but a status change assessment is not warranted.


Note: Participants who reside in a nursing facility should have their home evaluated in order to determine the need for an EAA.


Assessing the Home Environment

- ▶ The intent of the home walk-through is to identify environmental factors that may impede function and that prevent accessibility to regularly used rooms, or, prevent the participant from accomplishing needed tasks.
- ▶ Evaluate environmental hazards in combination with the participant's functional, cognitive and/or health status.
- ▶ Discuss problem areas that you cannot visually inspect (i.e., personal safety from the participant's perspective, lighting within the home at night).


How to assess Section O. Environmental Assessment?


Lighting: Look for problems due to poor evening lighting in critical areas of the home.

 Poorly lit pathways to the bathroom, or to get over a threshold.

 Dim living room area due to burnt light bulb.


Flooring and carpeting: Identify problems primarily associated with difficulties in walking, especially with assistive devices.


 Steps or raised floor within a room, unevenness or actual holes in floors etc. that can snag feet, canes, or walkers.

 Area Rug for participant diagnosed with Alzheimer's who is steady on their feet and does not utilize an assistive device.


How to assess Section O. Environmental Assessment?(Cont'd.)


Bathroom and toilet room: Identify problems with accomplishing needed tasks in the bathroom.

 Lack of handrails to help get in and out of bath tub, on and off toilet or into and out of the shower when needed.

 Inoperative guest bathroom not utilized by participant.


Kitchen: Look for hazardous or uninhabitable areas in the kitchen, excluding lighting.


 Dangerous stove, inoperative refrigerator or infestation by rats or bugs.

 Observing a spider crawling on the window seal.


How to assess Section O. Environmental Assessment?(Cont'd.)


Heating and cooling: Identify inadequate or inappropriate systems.

 Too hot in summer or cold in winter and/or is not controlled by client or caregiver.

 Participant prefers to leave the a/c unit set on 77 degrees year round.


Personal safety: Ask if potentially exposed to violence within or immediately outside of home.


 Real or perceived risk of someone breaking into the home, or fear of being attacked outside of home.

 Participant does not walk out to the mail box because it is too far to walk.


How to assess Section O. Environmental Assessment?(Cont'd.)


Access to home: Physical problems with the home that limits access.

 Participant ambulates via wheelchair only and has three steps at the entrance of the home.

 Participant has a ramp at the entrance of the home and would prefer a second ramp on the side door.

Access to rooms in house: Physical problems inside that limit access.

 Participant is restricted to a wheelchair and the chair cannot fit through the doorway leading into the bathroom.

 Participant cannot access their daughter's room upstairs when wanting to visit.

How to Remedy Environmental Hazards?

- ▶ When complex hazards, or functional impairments are identified, and the participant has access to covered therapy services through Medicaid, etc., then refer the participant to the doctor to request a referral to an occupational therapist to complete a home evaluation.
- ▶ Explore non-waiver remedies that would fix the problem; such as:
 - Lighting:
 - ◆ Add a night light to critical walkways.
 - Flooring & Carpeting:
 - ◆ Use double-sided tape to securely adhere a rug to the floor,
 - ◆ Tape down wires against base boards, and
 - ◆ Use duct tape to mark soft spots on the floor with an 'X' until repairs are made.

How to Remedy Environmental Hazards? (cont.'d)

▶ Additional non-waiver remedies:

■ Bathroom and toilet room:

- ◆ Drying off in the tub before stepping out when bottom of tub is slippery.

■ Access to home:

- ◆ For those able to walk, the use of different devices may enable the participant to get up/down steps effectively, thus preventing the need for a ramp.
 - For example, utilizing a quad cane to safely walk up/down steps while having a walker available at the bottom step to walk on the sidewalk.

How to Remedy Environmental Hazards? (cont.'d)

▶ Additional non-waiver remedies:

■ Access to rooms in house:

- ◆ Remove door-way thresholds,
- ◆ Rearrange furniture in the home to create clearer or wider pathways, and
- ◆ Switch the walker wheels, placing them on the inside of the walker.

Note: If the participant rents the home, contact the landlord to request modifications to the home.

Choosing Assistive Devices or EAA?

- ▶ Determine if the need can be met more cost effectively with the use of an assistive device and/or medical supply; such as, but not limited to:
 - Obtain a shower bench and/or install hand rail over bathtub faucet instead of installing a walk-in shower,
 - Obtain a bedside commode to place near bed or an elevated toilet seat with handles instead of a handicap commode, or
 - Install a hand rail along the stairs instead of putting in a ramp.

Note: Contact DME company for assistance with determining which device would be most appropriate for the participant's needs.

When to Implement EAA?

- ▶ After exploring the participant's needs, home environment, non-waiver remedies and assistive devices, a participant and SC may determine an EAA may be the best and most appropriate option.
- ▶ SCs will follow CCW procedure to submit requests for an EAA.
- ▶ Prior to submitting the request for EAA to OAAS regional office, ensure all options were explored and that the requested item is appropriate for the participant.
- ▶ Ensure the EAA request:
 - Is highly individualized for the participant, their home and needs, and
 - Has been thoroughly discussed with participant, family, informal supports, formal supports, PT, DSW, etc.

Including EAA in the Care Plan

- ▶ Not all items coded in Section O. will trigger the Environmental Assessment CAP, but it is very important to consider the safety of the participant, therefore all items coded will need to be care planned for.
- ▶ Provide details of the risks/hazards posed to the participant and indicate how the requested EAA will lessen the risk.

Including EAA in the Care Plan (cont.'d)

- ▶ Review Environmental Assessment CAP and Section O. of the MDS-HC to identify environmental conditions that are hazardous.
 - Address environmental concerns within the CAPS section under Environmental Assessment CAP, or
 - Identify within another CAP that fits appropriately.
 - ◆ Example: The need for a ramp has been identified because the participant ambulates via wheelchair only. SC coded O.1.g., but this is not a triggering response item; therefore, Environmental assessment CAP will not trigger. SC will discuss the need for the ramp within the ADL section when talking about the assistance needed with ambulating.

References

- ▶ <http://www.learnnottofall.com/content/fall-facts.jsp>
- ▶ Community Choices Waiver Provider Manual. Section 7.1 Covered Services. Issued 9/28/2015.
- ▶ RAI-Home Care Assessment Manual for version 2.0., Louisiana Specific Manual, Reissued 4/8/2011.